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Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky ..... (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Kusorgbor (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Ghana)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Agenda item 100: Report of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions *(continued)* (A/59/12 and Add.1, A/59/317, A/59/425-S/2004/808 and A/59/554)

1. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that his country's humanitarian concerns extended beyond the question of refugees from the Sudan, to include drought victims, internally displaced persons, and expellees from Ethiopia. Furthermore, enormous resources were required for the ongoing rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes relating to his country's war-damaged social and economic infrastructures. The Secretary-General's report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa (A/59/317) identified three key concepts as a framework for durable solutions (ibid., para. 92). The sharing of responsibilities by donors, host countries and countries of origin was essential to the success of those initiatives. In that regard, he regretted that the resources required for the Integrated Recovery Programme, aimed at the integrated transition from relief to development, had not yet materialized.

2. Despite the financial and logistical constraints involved, his Government remained committed to the voluntary-repatriation programme for Eritrean refugees living in the Sudan. Since the resumption of the programme at the end of the rainy season, more than 8,000 refugees had returned. It was hoped that 35,000 would return by the end of the year.

3. As to the estimated 13 million internally displaced persons in African countries, he noted that no single United Nations agency was directly mandated to address their concerns. However, the close collaboration between UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had played an important role. The United Nations agencies must seek to determine the underlying causes of internal displacement.

4. Little attention had been accorded to the direct relationship between Ethiopia's formal rejection of the border ruling made by the independent Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission and the fate of some 65,000 internally displaced persons. His delegation remained gravely concerned at the humanitarian impact on the civilian population, due primarily to the lack of serious efforts by the international community to consolidate peace between the two countries. It was vital for the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to do more to close the gap between its declared support for the Boundary Commission's decision and its obligation to show tangible commitment to speedy implementation.

5. **Ms. Romano** (Croatia) welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to develop and strengthen strategies and activities designed to ensure a more effective and efficient transition from humanitarian assistance to sustainable development for returnees. Croatia also fully supported proposed measures to foster international collaboration with a view to raising the profile of refugees on the United Nations agenda, and continued to attach great importance to the creation of sustainable conditions for the reintegration of all refugees. Her Government had shown continuity and good will and had taken specific measures to fulfil Croatia's commitments regarding the return process.

6. At the end of 2003 all three UNHCR field offices in Croatia had closed, bringing to an end 12 years of direct field presence and demonstrating that her country had made significant progress. Furthermore, Croatia's Law on Asylum and its Law on Foreigners had both come into force in 2004, creating the basis for the asylum procedure to be implemented in line with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the laws of the European Union and international refugee standards.

7. Among other recent measures, her Government had established a commission for the return of displaced persons and refugees and the repossession of property, which had made notable progress regarding the latter. Furthermore, a media campaign was being implemented, with UNHCR assistance, concerning a programme for former holders of tenancy rights, and had been expanded to Serbia and Montenegro and to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her Government participated actively in UNHCR educational and training programmes, and Croatian government officials participated in country-wide training workshops focusing on UNHCR and related issues. As a result of those and other measures, her country had made considerable progress in the return of refugees.

8. **Mr. Moon** Seoung-hyun (Republic of Korea) said that the significant decline in the number of persons of concern to UNHCR over recent years was largely

attributable to the tireless efforts of UNHCR to seek durable solutions. His delegation wished to commend UNHCR for its achievements, particularly its successful repatriation programmes in Africa, the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. However, the international community still faced many challenges, as illustrated by the emergency situation in the Sudan's Darfur region. The Republic of Korea supported the commitment of UNHCR to develop a collaborative approach to those challenges, including the sharing of experience and expertise with such agencies as the International Organization for Migration and the World Food Programme.

9. His country also supported the Convention Plus initiative (A/59/12, para. 22), which had become instrumental in dealing with many complex refugee programmes through special agreements. It trusted that UNHCR would continue to strengthen its operations, based on the humanitarian necessity to respond to asylum-seekers, and urged other Member States to support that endeavour. It welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to develop a framework for durable solutions (ibid., para. 25), particularly, the High Commissioner's intention to increase UNHCR involvement in resettlement activities.

10. His delegation supported the efforts of UNHCR to strengthen its financial basis, including by broadening its donor base and increasing private funding. Sufficient funding, combined with enhanced results-based planning and management, would have a positive impact, and the Republic of Korea hoped to increase its financial contribution in future years.

11. His delegation welcomed the sustained efforts of UNHCR to protect refugee women and children. Individual States should support the implementation by UNHCR of protection guidelines aimed at addressing their plight while fully respecting the fundamental principle of non-refoulement. His Government deplored the security risks facing humanitarian workers, and called on all States and international organizations to do their utmost to protect them.

12. **Ms. Hoch** (Liechtenstein) said that security issues were fast becoming one of the major challenges to humanitarian operations. Creating a climate of fear and insecurity had become a tactic of parties in conflict and, as a result, it was becoming increasingly difficult for humanitarian personnel to protect and assist refugees and internally displaced persons. Civilians had suffered disproportionately in situations of armed conflict as victims of serious human rights violations, intimidation and acts of violence, and United Nations staff and other humanitarian workers were increasingly at risk. The rise in the number of casualties among humanitarian staff operating in conflict and post-conflict situations was alarming. The difficult security conditions made it more and more difficult for the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations to provide protection and assistance.

13. Universally agreed principles of international humanitarian and human-rights law were often ignored by government forces and by the growing number of non-State actors involved in armed conflicts, making the situation of civilians even more desperate. Governments were primarily responsible for ensuring that all groups involved in armed conflicts abided by internationally agreed standards. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to transform humanitarian assistance into sustainable development in order to achieve durable solutions. It attached particular importance to the re-establishment and proper functioning of national protection mechanisms, particularly judicial and law-enforcement mechanisms. Moreover, ending impunity for and bringing to justice those responsible for violations of international humanitarian and human-rights law were among the preconditions for the successful return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons. The International Criminal Court (ICC) could also play a major role in that process, and her delegation wished to note that attacks intentionally directed against humanitarian personnel were regarded as war crimes under the ICC Statute.

14. Her delegation continued to believe that the application of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel was seriously flawed, and hoped that the General Assembly would soon adopt an optional protocol to remedy that situation. It hoped that the Fifth Committee's discussion of the Secretary-General's report on a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations (A/59/365 and Corr.1) would produce improvements in the near future.

15. The High Commissioner's report (A/59/12, para. 13) referred to the lack of distinction between migration control and refugee protection in the policies and practices of many States. The increasingly restrictive migration laws and policies of developed

countries must not lead to a decline in the protection of people in need or in the respect for their human rights, and her delegation welcomed the efforts undertaken by several international organizations to exchange information and promote greater policy coherence in their migration-related activities. It was only through coordinated efforts that the international community would find a comprehensive solution to the refugee problem.

16. *Ms. Kusorgbor (Ghana), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

17. **Ms. Hastaie** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in the absence of adequate international assistance, her country had been obliged to shoulder the burden of a huge number of refugees and displaced persons, mostly from Afghanistan. Following the major political developments in Afghanistan, the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan had signed a joint programme with UNHCR for the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees, enabling more than 1 million to return home since April 2002. However, more than 1.2 million Afghan refugees remained in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and a comprehensive approach was required to ensure their return and reintegration. All three parties agreed that the joint programme should continue, and her delegation trusted that the international community would help fund the process. Close consultations and coordination with host countries offered the best forum for evaluating the Afghan refugee situation and gradually bringing those UNHCR activities to a close.

18. With respect to Iraqi refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran, she noted that their assisted voluntary repatriation was a matter of urgency. Iran was particularly interested in consolidating security and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan.

19. The current global refugee situation required an effective and equitable mechanism for ensuring international responsibility and burden-sharing. Iran had supported the initiative of the High Commissioner to launch the Convention Plus process, and had also been an active member of the working group on resettlement. It welcomed the conclusion adopted by the Executive Committee of UNHCR on international cooperation and burden and responsibility sharing, and hoped that it would help to ease the heavy burden imposed on developing countries.

20. **Mr. Laurin** (Canada) said that his delegation welcomed the reduction in the number of persons of concern to UNHCR. However, the international community was faced with the same challenges as before, including efforts to halt human-rights violations, reduce insecurity, and end armed conflicts. More than ever before, the world's various crises recalled the importance of Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The crises of the past year — notably those in Haiti and the Sudan's Darfur region — made it more urgent for States to improve the means at their disposal to prevent the conflicts that produced refugee flows. Host States must also intensify their efforts to protect refugee populations and respect the principle of non-refoulement. Canada considered the collaboration between various agencies and UNHCR as essential, but was concerned at the difficulties faced by non-governmental organizations in their administrative and financial dealings with UNHCR.

21. Canada was delighted with the progress made by UNHCR and States in promoting the objectives of the Agenda for Protection, and welcomed the Executive Committee's adoption of two conclusions: one on international cooperation and burden and responsibility sharing in mass influx situations, and one on legal-safety issues in the context of voluntary repatriation. The two conclusions would play a major role in efforts to increase international peace and security, and his delegation hoped that the General Assembly would endorse them. Canada also welcomed the progress made on the Convention Plus initiative, and wished to thank UNHCR for its invaluable assistance in developing a multilateral framework of understandings on resettlement. However, resettlement was only part of the comprehensive approach required.

22. Canada would continue to try to ensure that its humanitarian aid contributions were timely, while encouraging UNHCR to adapt to new challenges and make progress in establishing its priorities, and would continue to support the efforts of UNHCR to improve its management and responsibility structures.

23. Canada strongly condemned attacks on refugees and humanitarian workers. The insecurity of refugees in Chad and Burundi demonstrated the need to preserve the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum and to adopt a comprehensive approach to refugee protection. Canada supported UNHCR efforts made by UNHCR to focus on developing strategies to solve that

problem, and regarded the security of UNHCR staff and its implementing partners as a priority concern. The work undertaken by UNHCR to enhance accountability and its capacity to meet staff security needs was critical, but it must be consistent with the significant changes made to the United Nations security-management system and must take into account the relationship with implementing and operational partners. Canada encouraged the Organization to raise awareness of protection issues among its staff, and trusted that UNHCR would assign more staff to refugee protection.

24. **Mr. Prica** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that, in view of the situation in many countries around the world, the need for a new international humanitarian order was greater than ever before. The Committee's efforts were not intended to replace the existing body of international law and practice, but rather to adjust it to the new challenges facing mankind. General Assembly resolution 57/184 called for the development of an agenda for humanitarian action. It was important for all Member States to be involved in determining the contents of such an agenda and to support the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard.

25. The 1988 report of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, entitled "Winning the Human Race", found that modern man was at peace neither with himself nor with his environment, and yet never before had humans wielded as much power over their destiny and planet. It was sad and disturbing to note that, despite considerable efforts to promote peace and prosperity, the number of victims of armed conflicts between and within States and of poor and deprived people around the globe continued to rise, while human-rights violations continued.

26. During the past decade, his country and people had not only suffered considerably, but also learned many lessons about how to build a common future. That experience had strengthened his delegation's belief in the need for an agenda for humanitarian action. Many widespread problems required the urgent attention of the international community, such as the increasing number of internally displaced persons and the rights of minorities, women, children and older persons, to name but a few. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the positive role played by the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues and hoped it would contribute to the constructive follow-up of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Lastly, he reiterated his country's support for the draft resolution on the promotion of a new international humanitarian order.

27. **Mr. Nikiforov** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation continued to observe its commitments for the protection of refugees and cooperated closely with UNHCR and other international humanitarian organizations. The information on the recent decline in the number of refugees was welcome, but many areas of conflict and tension remained, and the best way to continue the improvement was to bring those conflicts to an end. Closer coordination was needed with Governments so that international protection could not be used as cover by terrorists.

28. Globalization had also affected the flow of refugees; many individuals from developing countries seeking asylum in industrialized countries were economic migrants. Asylum could be abused by international criminal groups seeking new avenues for their business, and consequently, host countries were developing stricter regimes for asylum-seekers. Increased international and regional coordination to resolve humanitarian problems and control migration was needed.

29. The 1996 Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was an example of such coordination. The May 2004 review of the outcome of that Conference had indicated that progress had been made by CIS Governments in enacting and implementing relevant legislation.

30. With regard to internally displaced persons, it was his Government's position that States should bear primary responsibility for them, with international assistance provided only on their request and with the agreement of the United Nations. International humanitarian law should continue to apply, but UNHCR should have a limited mandate in that area, particularly in view of its limited financial resources.

31. His Government was grateful to UNHCR for the assistance it had provided to internally displaced persons in the northern Caucasus and Chechnya. It was time for international assistance to be redirected towards the rehabilitation of the region's economy.

32. The Russian Federation supported efforts to increase the effectiveness of UNHCR activities and reform its financial structure within its existing mandate. It saw no current need to review its mandate.

33. **Ms. Pérez Álvarez** (Cuba) said that her country wished to reiterate its commitment to the work of UNHCR and the leadership it had shown in protecting millions of people, and welcomed the fact that it had fulfilled its strictly humanitarian role free of all politicization. Respect for international humanitarian law and the sovereignty of States must continue to be fundamental elements in its work.

34. As was well known, UNHCR had been undergoing a financial crisis. However, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons continued to rise. The situation was most glaring in asylum countries, particularly developing countries, which assumed a heavy burden by receiving high numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers. The distribution of responsibilities at the international level was, however, increasingly unjust. In addition, most resources were allocated to critical situations of mass migratory flows, while other situations, which were just as serious but received less publicity and lasted longer, were not allocated the resources they needed.

35. Around 20 million people enjoyed the protection of UNHCR. The structural causes behind mass flows of refugees and internally displaced persons ranged from extreme poverty and chronic underdevelopment to international military conflicts to defend major geopolitical interests and control strategic natural resources. The only way to do away with such causes was through strict respect for international law and the Charter, international cooperation that promoted durable solutions, the adequate mobilization of resources and support for developing countries that received refugees.

36. Cuba called on States and organizations with more economic possibilities to allocate more resources to international protection, while emphasizing that contributions must not be conditioned by donor preferences. It also expressed its unconditional solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees without a State to which to return, and condemned both those who had expelled them from their land and those who supported such actions.

37. Cuba's material possibilities had been severely limited by the economic, financial and trade embargo, which only two weeks previously had been overwhelmingly condemned by the General Assembly. It nonetheless had a long tradition of receiving refugees, offering protection and humanitarian assistance to hundreds of fellow Latin American and Caribbean citizens. Despite being a developing country, Cuba had by and large used its own resources in dealing with refugees, only turning to UNHCR when faced with significant numbers. Her Government would continue working with UNHCR and called on the international community to make refugees a priority.

38. **Ms. Groux** (Switzerland) said that her delegation welcomed the conclusion adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the Executive Committee of UNHCR to strengthen the UNHCR protection mandate, reasserting protection as one of its overall priorities and targeting it more effectively in operational planning. Her country had always backed measures to strengthen that aspect of its mandate and had been calling for such measures for several years. However, when it came to allocating financial resources and managing human resources, her Government felt that protection continued to take second place to assistance, whereas resources should have been shared equally. Her delegation wished to emphasize that assistance was a useful and necessary operational complement to protection, but must never replace it. Her delegation therefore encouraged UNHCR rapidly to strengthen its protection mandate in line with its recent conclusion.

39. Her delegation wished to honour the efforts of humanitarian staff, particularly those working for UNHCR and its partners on the ground. Such staff were exposed to considerable danger on a daily basis, their security must therefore continue to be an absolute priority for the international community. Her Government had always been concerned by the security issue and supported all measures taken by UNHCR to improve the security of its staff. Her delegation was also pleased to announce that the Swiss federal and cantonal authorities had, in cooperation with UNHCR, drawn up a plan to improve security at UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, the cost of which would be borne by Switzerland.

40. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that the number of people coming under the auspices of UNHCR remained worrying, as over 17 million people were still waiting for a solution. Africa was still the continent most affected, and the search for durable solutions remained

paramount. His country had always favoured durable solutions, voluntary repatriation, integration and reinsertion. In that regard, it welcomed the UNHCR Framework for Durable Solutions, which included the "4Rs" concept (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction) and strategies for development assistance for refugees. His country also welcomed the establishment of partnerships between UNHCR and various humanitarian players, so that together they could tackle emergencies. His country was aware of the challenges surrounding humanitarian issues and called for the underlying causes of displacement and exile to be addressed. Only by strengthening development assistance would it be possible to eradicate such causes and stabilize post-conflict situations.

41. His delegation endorsed the areas identified in the High Commissioner's report (A/59/12 (Supp.12)). Africa was a striking example of the unequal treatment of humanitarian crises in the world and of the syndrome of "donor fatigue". African refugees were at a considerable disadvantage compared to other refugees; whereas all refugees deserved to be treated with dignity and receive equal attention. Given that many Algerians had themselves been refugees during his country's struggle for independence, his country had — once independent — willingly responded to requests for humanitarian assistance.

42. The fate of over 160,000 Saharan refugees living in camps in Tindouf was inextricably linked to implementation of the peace plan for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, which had been unanimously endorsed by Security Council resolution 1495 (2003) and remained the only acceptable way out of a humanitarian crisis that spanned almost 30 years.

43. **Mr. Vitrenko** (Ukraine) said that, though refugee issues were one of the oldest challenges facing humanity, there was still a pressing need for the international community to draw up reliable and forward-looking preventative strategies to avoid mass forced displacement. The recent humanitarian crisis in Darfur was a sad reminder of the urgency of the task. His delegation praised the UNHCR response to emergency situations caused by armed conflicts and encouraged the United Nations system to implement the "4Rs" initiative and other concepts included in the Framework for Durable Solutions. Following the tragedy in the Gatumba refugee camp in Burundi earlier in 2004, he welcomed steps taken by UNHCR to strengthen its partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, so as to prevent such disasters in the future.

44. He thanked the UNHCR representative office in his country for assisting his Government in implementing refugee legislation and the recently amended law on citizenship. Since 1994, more than 2,500 people, mostly from Afghanistan, had been granted refugee status in his country, and assistance and integration programmes had been launched. One priority of his country's migration policy was the return of Crimean Tatars. Since 1990, more than 260,000 formerly deported peoples and their descendants had returned to Crimea and now accounted for 12 per cent of its population. His country had also made considerable efforts to address their citizenship issues on a multilateral basis. Following the 1998 treaty between Ukraine and Uzbekistan, some 23,000 people had taken advantage of simplified procedures to obtain Ukrainian citizenship. His Government welcomed UNHCR assistance in developing refugee-status determination hubs in regions with the most asylum-seekers and refugees and its measures to raise donor support for asylum system development in his country. He looked forward to cooperating with UNHCR on structural reform of the migration service at all levels.

45. His delegation welcomed the fact that the UNHCR representative office in Ukraine would become the regional office for Ukraine, Belarus and the Republic of Moldova. Activities should continue to focus on promoting subregional and regional cooperation and cross-border dialogue with European Union States, particularly in the context of European Union enlargement. Migration, asylum and border officials from 10 countries were now participating in the Söderköping cross-border cooperation initiative. He hoped that the high-level meeting in Belarus in May 2004 had helped strengthen dialogue on refugees, displaced persons and returnees in the region. His country welcomed the establishment of the Cross-Border Cooperation Process Secretariat in Kyiv with a view to better coordinating activities in connection with the Söderköping process. His country would appreciate continued assistance from UNHCR in order to improve current programmes and strengthen cooperation between government institutions and local non-governmental organizations on such issues. The

support of the international community — both financially and in terms of political will — was essential to the successful implementation of the UNHCR mandate. His delegation therefore welcomed the Convention Plus initiative, which aimed to resolve refugee issues through responsibility and burden-sharing.

46. **Mr. Israfilov** (Azerbaijan) said that his country had been facing the phenomenon of forced displacement since 1987 and, according to the Secretary-General's Representative for internally displaced persons, had one of the largest displaced populations in the world. The issue was therefore an ongoing priority for his Government. Its experience in dealing with the phenomenon could be divided into the emergency phase and the development phase. While it was difficult to define precise time frames, the transition from emergency to development was closely linked to the failure to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict between his country and Armenia under the aegis of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It was also clear that the eventual resolution of the refugee issue depended on the liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and a final resolution of the armed conflict, which had caused population displacement in the first place.

47. The emergency phase had been characterized by active consideration of the humanitarian catastrophe in his country by the relevant international organizations, particularly the United Nations, culminating in a number of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Several years of negotiations in OSCE had raised hopes that the conflict could be settled, the occupied territories liberated, and refugees and displaced persons returned to their places of origin. Of particular significance was the 1997 meeting of the Presidents of the two countries, who had adopted the proposals of OSCE. The reaction by radicals and militarists in Armenia, however, had forced the Armenian President to resign and the new President had withdrawn the agreement, demonstrating that Armenia's territorial ambitions took precedence over the grievances of displaced Armenians and the disastrous situation of Armenians in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. The lack of any immediate prospect of refugees and displaced persons returning and the ongoing occupation of Azerbaijani territories had led to donor fatigue, forced a number of international humanitarian organizations to leave and ended the emergency phase.

48. His Government had done its best to expand humanitarian programmes and adapt its multisector policy to the basic needs of displaced people previously covered by international humanitarian aid, focusing on rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-affected territories, temporary refugee and displaced person settlements, physical, social and agricultural infrastructure, and income generation. However, owing to inadequate external assistance during the transitional period, his Government had been forced to allocate additional resources to such groups, thereby significantly curtailing its capacity to overcome the transition and ensure full-scale development of the economy. The protracted nature of the conflict and lack of active hostilities meant that international attention had also faded. His country's numerous appeals to OSCE to halt illegal activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan had been neglected. He rejected recent allegations that countries affected by the protracted armed conflict used the refugees as pawns, and stressed that it was lack of political will to address the root causes of displacement that had led to the prolongation of the armed conflict and the continued occupation of parts of his country. He hoped that those countries would change their position after the upcoming discussion of the item in the General Assembly.

49. According to the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/59/12), the refugee population in Armenia was well over 200,000 while in his country it was only 326. Such unbalanced figures provided ample opportunity for speculation by Armenia. Most international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council, observed impartiality and either indicated the correct figures or claimed that since 2000 there were no refugees in either country. His country had raised the issue with UNHCR on a number of occasions and again encouraged the High Commissioner not to let Armenia use unbalanced figures.

50. Parts of Azerbaijan were still under occupation and the appropriate conditions for the safe return of displaced persons had not therefore been created. He therefore called again on UNHCR, the relevant aid agencies and donor countries to continue providing

humanitarian and development assistance to refugees and displaced persons in his country.

51. **Mr. Alvi** (India) said that developing countries were host to the largest number of refugees, and that called for a strategic adjustment in UNHCR programmes. The link between poverty and refugee flows was well-recognized, and durable solutions would remain elusive until the root causes were addressed. The global development agenda must therefore underpin international efforts to ensure prevention and address the relief and rehabilitation needs of refugees.

52. His delegation recognized the potential of the Convention Plus initiative. It also welcomed the finalization of the Multilateral Framework of Understandings on resettlement, especially at a time when the international-refugee-law framework was being challenged by growing xenophobic tendencies, violations of the principle of non-refoulement and new barriers in traditional countries of resettlement. The trend towards regionalization of solutions to refugee situations, however, could be interpreted as a new form of containment of refugee movements, and hence a derogation from the principle of international responsibility.

53. The success of UNHCR in achieving the goals of the Agenda for Protection depended on its ability to work in close cooperation with the States concerned. Given that the bulk of refugee flows occurred in developing countries, voluntary repatriation seemed the most viable and durable solution.

54. In the view of his delegation, UNHCR should maintain its focus on those who had first charge on its mandate — the refugees. Internally displaced persons were first and foremost the responsibility of Member States, and UNHCR should have a role in situations involving them only on the explicit request of the State concerned.

55. UNHCR had a unique role because of its global mandate. Its reliance on voluntary contributions rendered absolutely essential the highest standards of impartiality, transparency and accountability in its management and programmes. India was committed to working with the international community to address new and emerging challenges in a spirit of compassion, solidarity and burden-sharing.

56. **Mr. Anshor** (Indonesia) said that his delegation was encouraged by the decline in the number of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, due to the initiatives of the High Commissioner, including the "4Rs" (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction), enhanced coordination with other United Nations agencies and the Convention Plus initiative.

57. Indonesia expressed its appreciation to UNHCR for its assistance in facilitating the repatriation of some 252,000 refugees in West Timor province to Timor-Leste in 2002 and 2003. Further efforts were under way to resettle those who had chosen to remain in Indonesia. Humanitarian relief efforts in that province were winding down, while resettlement and reintegration efforts were being stepped up. Prompt action had enabled Indonesia and Timor Leste to avoid the potentially destabilizing political and social problems that had frequently accompanied longstanding refugee situations in other parts of the world.

58. The difficulties in that area had been partly due to the unilateral imposition of an unfavourable security status on the region by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator in 2000. In June 2004 the security status for West Timor had been lowered from phase five to phase four. However, assistance from UNHCR and the international community was still beneficial for the integration of the remaining displaced persons into society and for the transition to development.

59. The success of the resolution of the refugee problem in West Timor was an example of effective cooperation between a host country and international agencies, especially UNHCR. The Government acknowledged that it could not have been achieved without assistance from outside. More must be done, however, to ensure adequate resources for humanitarian assistance without diverting resources from such equally important goals as sustainable development.

60. **Ms. Mtawali** (United Republic of Tanzania) noted that the refugee situation in many African countries was characterized by large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, unpredictability, newly-emerging refugee situations and underfunding. Although the projected budget for Africa for 2005 was the largest in recent years, it still did not meet ever-growing demands. Unpredictable

situations made management very complex. Nonetheless, her Government continued to honour its international obligations and to abide strictly by the principle of non-refoulement.

61. Her country was currently host to over 600,000 refugees, categorized into two groups. The first category comprised the 1972 refugees from Burundi, referred to as the "old caseload", located in refugee settlements in the Rukwa and Tabora regions. They no longer had the attention of UNHCR and the international community, and for over three decades her Government had borne the full burden of hosting and protecting them. It was currently undertaking a survey to determine those who might wish to be repatriated as the situation in Burundi continued to improve. Her Government requested the international community to assist those who opted for repatriation. The second category were referred to as "new caseload" refugees. They had come recently (1993-2004), mostly from Burundi, and were sheltered in refugee camps in the north-west regions of Kagera and Kigoma.

62. Her delegation noted with concern the dwindling funds for humanitarian emergencies and protracted situations in Africa, and appealed to the donor community to honour its commitments to sustain and stabilize the food pipeline. Her Government supported the Convention Plus initiative, but stressed that each country scenario called for specific solutions. For example, Tanzania was susceptible to refugee influxes because of its close proximity to neighbours faced with frequent internal conflicts. Stabilizing those situations to prevent outflows and permit voluntary repatriation, rather than local integration across the board, was the best durable solution.

63. The United Republic of Tanzania had been involved in the local integration of about 3,000 Somali refugees, some of whom had applied for naturalization. However, the international community had not offered significant support to their integration; indeed, UNHCR was preparing for a final pull-out from the programme before major infrastructure arrangements and basic social services had been completed. The Government had allocated a generous amount of land to the old "caseload", but was disheartened that the international community had not acknowledged the effort and expected it to provide even more land.

64. The launch of the Tripartite Commission on voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in 2001 demonstrated the commitment of her Government to solving the problem. Some 168,000 Burundian refugees had been repatriated voluntarily, but the pace had been unsatisfactory in large part because of the poor integration capacity in Burundi. Efforts were also under way to revive the Tripartite Commission on voluntary repatriation of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

65. In order to ensure that voluntary repatriation was successful, sustainable and irreversible, the peace and security situation in the countries of origin must improve. The Great Lakes peace process sought to bring lasting peace, security and stability to the region. A Great Lakes summit would soon take place in the United Republic of Tanzania with a view to paving the way for a comprehensive plan of action for peace, democracy and development in the region. She invited the international community to participate in that historic initiative.

66. **Mr. Husain** (Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa (A/59/317), said it was encouraging to note that 2003 had witnessed an intense peace process and that, as a result, the number of refugees in the region had shown a decline in 2004. He also shared the concern expressed, however, over the impediments to refugees' enjoyment of basic rights. On the global level, it was also encouraging to note from the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/59/12) that a further decline had occurred in the aggregate number of refugees worldwide. OIC remained prepared to play a complementary and proactive role in assisting Governments in their efforts to foster policies and programmes for resolving conflict and establishing an environment of durable peace.

67. He drew attention to the plight of refugees stemming from the conflicts in such areas as the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. While encouraging the ongoing peace process in those conflict areas, OIC continued to hope that the international community would make efforts to de-escalate the tensions in those regions.

68. He commended the leadership of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner and the dedication of their staff to their very challenging mission under increasingly dangerous circumstances.

69. **Mr. Al-Hussein** (Jordan) said that Jordan valued the growing role of UNHCR in providing protection and assistance and hoped that the implementation of the Agenda for Protection would lead to durable solutions, especially successful repatriation. It also believed that more coordination among UNHCR and other relevant agencies and organizations would help States to take concrete measures and develop mechanisms that could include early-warning systems and information-sharing, leading to greater emergency preparedness and equitable burden-sharing.

70. In the overall context of humanitarian challenges, Jordan had long supported the efforts to develop a new international humanitarian order, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/59/554). Although the General Assembly had adopted numerous resolutions on the subject and the Secretary-General's suggestions had been implemented, the number of victims of humanitarian situations and armed conflict continued to increase. Consequently, the need to develop an agenda for humanitarian action, as called for in that report, was greater than ever. Jordan keenly favoured the adoption of a resolution that would further strengthen the efforts of the Secretary-General to proceed with the elaboration of the proposed agenda, and hoped that it would receive the support of Member States.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.